

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL TORONTO

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INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

ALL CONSULATES IN CANADA VIA POUCH

UNCLAS TORONTO 1432

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: ENRG, PINT, CA

SUBJECT: ONTARIO ENERGY MINISTER GALLS ON OTTAWA FOR LEADERSHIP

1. ON ENERGY DAY, AUGUST 31, ONTARIO ENERGY MINISTER DENNIS TIMBRELL ADDRESSED A LUNCHEON AT THE CANADIAN NATIONAL EXHIBITION ON THE TOPIC "ENERGY IN CONFEDERATION" . MOST OF HIS REMARKS REFERRED TO THE URGENT NEED FOR OTTAWA TO EXERT LEADERSHIP IN CONSTRUCTING A NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY BUT HE ALSO DEVOTED A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF HIS SPEECH TO THE MISUNDERSTANDING THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THE PROVINCES AND WHICH ARE REFLECTED IN TOPICS SUCH AS ENERGY. HE ARGUED THAT ENERGY, BILINGUALISM, ETC., ARE NOW EXAGGERATING THE UNCHANGED TRADITIONAL VIEWPOINT IN ONE PROVINCE CONCERNING ANOTHER, THAT CANADIANS, IN ALLOWING TOPICS SUCH AS ENERGY TO DIVIDE RATHER THAN UNITE THEM HAVE BECOME "MORE AND MORE PREOCCUPIED WITH NARROWER AND MORE LOCALIZED ECONOMIC PROSPECTS AND SOCIAL ASPIRATIONS, LESS TOLERANT OF OUR FELLOW CITIZENS, SISTER PROVINCES AND ALTERNATE REGIONS, LESS COMMITTED TO A LARGER NATIONHOOD AND A LARGER CANADIANISM".

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2. HE STATED THAT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR TENSION AND MISUNDERSTANDING RESULTING FROM THE LACK OF A NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY "LIES AT THE DOOR OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA. WE HAVE LACKED LEADERSHIP AT THE CENTER". HE CONTINUED THAT NO PROVINCE'S "NATIONAL" POLICY WILL BE ACCEPTABLE IN ANOTHER PROVINCE AND THAT "IF IN TERMS OF FOSSIL FUELS, THE NATIONAL INTEREST IS NOT DEFINED AND DEFENDED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA, IT CANNOT BE DONE BY ANY OTHER AUTHORITY IN CANADA. WE ALL HAVE AN OBVIOUS VESTED INTEREST IN THE LEVEL OF THE PRICE, THE LEVEL OF ROYALTIES. THE INCIDENCE OF ENERGY-RELATED TAXES."

3. TIMBRELL TOLD HIS AUDIENCE THAT OTTAWA "INVALIDATED ITSELF FOR THE ROLE OF NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY DESIGNERS ... BY ITSELF BECOMING ONE OF THE PLAYERS." HE STATED OTTAWA'S NEED FOR ENLARGED INCOME "CONSTRUCTED ITS OWN UNIQUE CONFLICT OF INTEREST." HE SAID "ENERGY IN CANADA IS A VERY WEIRD GAME WITH NO RULES, NO PRECEDENTS AND NO UNCOMMITTED OFFICIALS."

4. TIMBRELL STATED THE OPINION THAT OTTAWA HAS BLOCKED ITS OPTIONS ON A NATIONAL POLICY, APPLYING PARTICULARLY TO PRICE BUT MIGHT STILL HAVE SOME PLAY IN THE ASPECT OF EQUALIZATION AND SUPPLY. HE URGED OTTAWA TO START MAKING DECISIONS, GIVING THE MACKENZIE VALLEY PIPELINE AS A PARTICULAR EXAMPLE WHERE RUMOR SUGGESTS THE GOVERNMENT WILL TRY TO WAFFLE. "JUDGING OTTAWA'S ENERGY POLICY IS A GUESSING GAME. IF THE POLICY IS TO CONTINUE TO AVOID DECISION-MAKING, IT IS A DANGEROUS POLICY."

5. THE SEPTEMBER 3 TORONTO STAR FEATURED MAJOR EXCERPTS FROM THE TIMBRELL SPEECH AS ITS EDITORIAL PAGE OPINION COLUMN. DIGGINS

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